

## UNRUH — Continued from page 3

taken more. "I think I missed out by not...learning about structure," she says. In her latest novel, she feels she has finally achieved a good balance between character development and plot.

Unruh is a graduate of The Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C. and has exhibited artwork in Washington and at the Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts. "I've always loved doing both art and writing," she says. But now she doesn't have room to build the large painted plywood constructions that she creates and so, for the time being, with a full-time secretarial job in a Wilmington law office, she is focusing her off hours just on writing.

With the support of a Masters Fellowship on top of her other writing awards, Unruh is eager to start committing words to paper for her next novel.

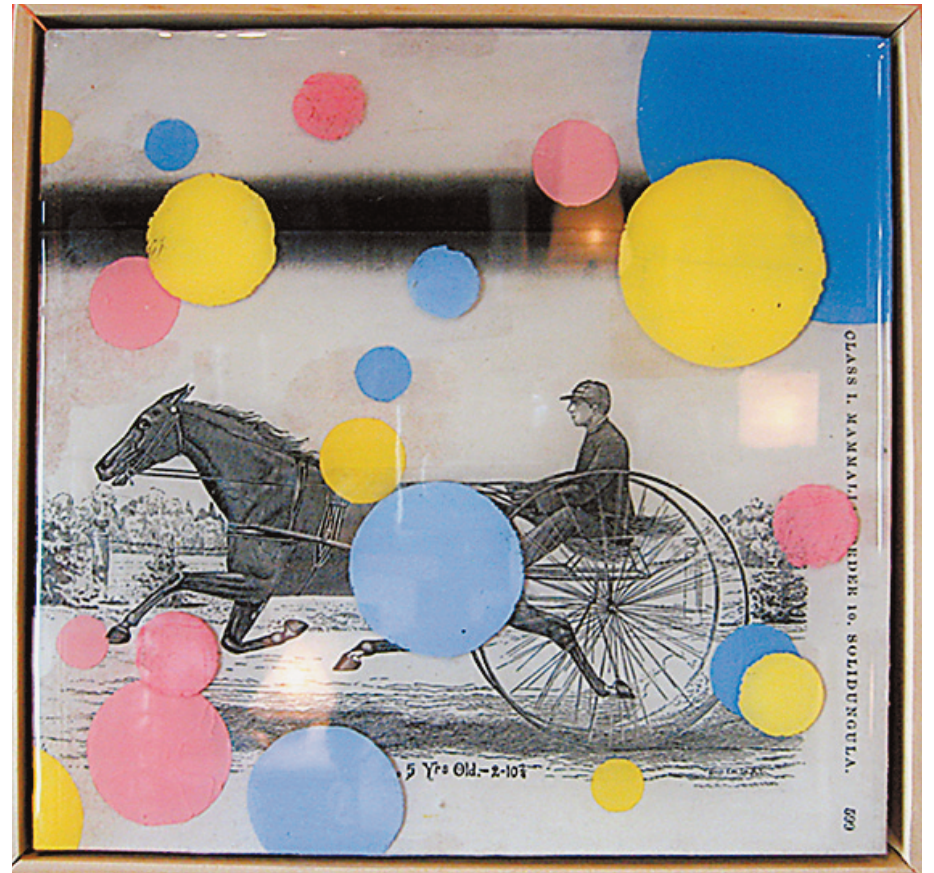
*I am fascinated by how a past can mold a future and how fate, combined with personal choices chart a destiny. I am interested in themes of emotional and physical vulnerability, aspects of ourselves we compartmentalize and keep hidden from others, but which, when exposed, bring us to recognize our common humanity. In my writing, I hope to inspire compassion, perhaps even admiration, for so-called "lost souls." I'm also drawn to themes of beauty vs. ugliness, how to reveal the palatable within the sordid. I try to embroider with sensory details and to capture humor or poignancy in pathetic situations. The conflict between the wish to show one's "ugly," vulnerable side and the longing to be accepted and loved "as is" is always apparent in my characters. In addition, my German heritage plays a role in my writing. I grew up on Grimm's fairy tales and the notion that past missteps or unresolved conflicts will come back full circle to ambush a character is strong in my work, as is the need for redemption through learning from one's past.*

Thirty-eight days before his wedding, my father, Wolfgang Drumpf, a wild and bullheaded widower, had a freak accident involving squirrels. My sister, Sonja, called me at Barrel's Bottom, the strip club where I worked in Washington, D.C. Figuring he'd lopped a thumb off in a rusty trap, I thought, "Margaret will never marry him now." And I felt the despair I'd felt as a little girl, watching my father's women come and go.

What woman in her right mind would marry my father? He wore women's Birkenstock sandals in public (purchased out of a bin at Cow Town by mistake, but still) with Christmas tree ankle socks and dirty short-shorts. And there were other, worse eccentricities that limited his prospects, even without a grotesque disfigurement from a run-in with a squirrel.

Sonja never called me at work. She hated that I danced. It made me sad to remember our picnics with Mrs. Beasley and Baby Tenderlove under rain umbrellas in the sunshine, how we quizzed each other on vocabulary and taught ourselves from a library book how to crochet. At night when Wolfgang went out on dates, we took turns standing on his bed, fainting onto his puffed-up eiderdown quilt. We'd root through his closet to find our mother's leather handbag that held a handkerchief still redolent with 4711. Hypnotized, we'd pass the hanky back and forth, dizzy from inhaling. Then Sonja would get tired and go to bed, and I would sit on the wooden step with a butcher knife and listen for murderers until Wolfgang came home and we were all safe.

Excerpt from the novel *Various States of Undress*  
by Roz Unruh



Michael Matarese, *Solidungula*, Xerox, acrylic, epoxy-resin on wood, 9'x 8', 2006



**Michael Matarese**  
*Emerging Professional, Painting*  
Wilmington

Michael Matarese graduated with honors from Delaware College of Art and Design and from the University of Delaware, where he received the Fine Arts and Visual Communications Faculty Award and numerous honors in juried undergraduate exhibitions. Last year he was awarded a residency fellowship at the Vermont Studio Center in Johnson, Vt. He currently teaches drawing at Delaware College of Art and Design. His work has been exhibited in Wilmington at the eleventh and orange gallery and the DuPont Theatre. He has participated in group shows at Gallery MC and Organization of Independent Artists, both in New York City, and the Afif Gallery in Philadelphia. In January, his work was part of the Arlington (Va.) Arts Center's exhibition "Fresh Paint: Process and Possibility." He is also the co-creator of Gallery 212, an independent studio/gallery space in downtown Wilmington.

*Much of my work begins with a specific starting point, a kind of problem to solve. I generally do not spend that much time debating the reasoning behind these starting points, though they usually represent remnants of people, be it a handprint on paper or stockpiles of post-consumer waste. The starting points also reference the handmade quality that is essential to my work. The important part emerges in the time and specificity put into the manipulation and embellishment of those original starting points through all sorts of different filters—like copy machines, scanners, projectors and rigorous tracings and retracings — in a way, making a mountain out of a molehill.*

*I generally carry out these projects within the realm of painting and drawing, although I have been working with sculpture and installation recently and see it as being just as relevant to the work as painting. I think the idea of elongating a certain moment in time is what always has guided my work, no matter what the medium. Having been schooled as a painter, though, that history is always present within my work.*

**Matarese will exhibit his paintings in the Delaware Division of the Arts Mezzanine Gallery in September.**